

## Farewell to Russ

Delivered by

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Russ would want me to ask:

So what have you done for the Navy today!?

It was his hallmark....

Perhaps you knew him as Mr. Egnor, Darrell, Russ, Dad, Brother, Son, Egnor, or Senior Chief Journalist Russell D. Egnor, United States Naval Reserve....

However you knew him, you soon learned that he was, in his own way, a living legend—a combat photojournalist, a leader, a man of vision and humor....

A man of true loyalty to his family, to his friends, to his Navy, and to his opinions.

And always an unabashed advocate for Navy Photography and photographers worldwide.

Russ asked for no quarter....and gave none!

If you didn't love the Navy and Navy Photography...then God help you.

Russ didn't want his send off to be sad.

My challenge is to fulfill his wish... and so—as he would say, “he who does not toot his own horn, is destined not to hear the sweet music!”

Russ, we're going to toot your horn in these few minutes—and the music comes from the many who knew you....

One shipmate said that behind the rough and gruff exterior of the sometimes grumpy old bear, there was a very soft, sweet, big-hearted teddy bear — who would give Hugs.

Another remembered Russ' ever constant reference to marginal PAO performance as 825s—or half-accomplished 1650s.

Some knew that Russ' hearing aid was turned on only some of the time. I knew that if he went to “adjust it,” he was giving new meaning to “tuning you out.” Who will forget his distinguished ties, loud in color, often with messages.

And lest we forget his infamous Egnor-grams.

Messages from Russ came in two flavors

—ones with smiley sailor faces conveying a job well done;

The second pictured the Tasmanian Devil raising hell because something got dropped, didn't get done and because of it, Navy Photography was set back.

After the fact, many a photojournalist learned that Russ entered their work in photo contests; they would win; he would delight in breaking the news and sending them their prize.

Russ was a giver—the kind of man who would purchase an airplane ticket and pay for a hotel room for a Petty Officer whose command could not afford to send him back to the United States so he could receive the Military Photographer of the Year Award or the White House Press Photographers award.

Many a PAO or PH received plaques from Russ...all paid for out Russ' pocket.

Some will remember his donating sick and personal leave to others in need.

Russ could capture the moment...

Once a Seaman in his office failed at photographing a promotion ceremony.

When he saw the results of his film he chewed out the striker, then straight-faced went to the Admiral and blamed the failed job on HOT film.

The result was a refrigerator for storing film, something Russ had been trying to do for months. HOT film had nothing to do with the seaman's failure. But the seaman never failed another assignment.





Then there were reserve adventures.

In one instance when Chief Egnor was at Camp LeJuene, he and his CO were riding in Russ' van in search of a river boat exercise site when we were surrounded by defending Seals with M-16s aimed, and we were ordered to get out of the van. Calmly, Chief Egnor asked the Seal who was pointing his weapon through the driver's side if he had bullets? A terse response came... "NO, get out of the van!"

Chief Egnor quietly reached under his seat and withdrew the largest pistol I had ever seen and turned to me and said in a very audible tone: "I have bullets, what do you want to do, skipper?"

The Seals let us pass.

Talks with Russ could be stern and heated but underneath it all was the proverbial coach, big brother, dad and Navy Chief.

The consummate Chief—a giver—always looking out for what was best not for himself but for the Sailor—anyone—he was counseling. And we've ALL been counseled.

A former skipper of Russ said: "I well remember the cold winter mornings when he would roll up for drill in Norfolk on his bike in a bright orange jumpsuit. Russ would get up at 4 a.m. and ride down from Bull Run Mountain outside Manassas. That's a cold four-

hour ride. He never complained and was always there to put in a long day with the rest of the crew."

But then Russ was about making his shipmates proud and looking good.

In his civilian Pentagon job, Russ worked tirelessly to get as many Navy photos as he could published to tell the Navy story. Russ was extremely proud of both the Navy and "his photographers."

He just wanted to share their fine work with as many people as possible—another way of giving.

It was noted in his civilian performance evaluation "that Mr. Egnor's ability to make decisions without hesitation makes him one of the most independent and functional divisions in this command. His leadership skills contributes directly to the Navy being on the cutting edge of electronic digital photography.

"Mr. Egnor is truly one of the great national treasures and mainstays of the United States Navy."

In an award he was to receive from the prestigious National Press Photographers Association in July, Russ was recognized for:

"Leading the way in military digital imaging with the establishment of a worldwide network of Navy photographers based on ships at sea and naval stations capable of receiving images from major military operations 24





hours a day through a vast computer network for instant release."

The Secretary of the Navy's Distinguished Civilian Service Award was presented to his mother yesterday. Yet another testimony to Russ' treasured service to the Navy.

He lived life to the fullest and gave generously to all who knew and loved him...a lesson we all can learn.

Lucille Egnor—better known as Granny—was the Port in the Storm, the safe harbor.

To all the family, thank you for sharing Russ with us.

As he often said:

"I must hurry, for there they go and I am their leader."

Russ, the music was sweet.

We shall miss ya.

You set high standards for each of us who follow.

We are all the richer for having known you!

Farewell shipmate; good-bye, good friend.

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